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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEL AVIV 001968

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NEA FOR BURNS/SATTERFIELD
NEA/SA/EX FOR AUSTIN-FERGUSON; DEPT FOR DS/IP/NEA;
DEPT FOR DS/IP/ITA; DRL FOR A/S CRANER;
NSC FOR ABRAMS/DANIN;
USAID FOR DCHA, DCHA/FPP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [CASC](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [GZ](#)

SUBJECT: THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND APRIL 1, 2004 -- (1400 HOURS LOCAL) -- DIRECT DEPOSIT OF SECURITY FORCE SALARIES GOES INTO EFFECT APRIL 1; ONE PALESTINIAN INJURED IN WEST BANK ANTI-FENCE DEMO

THIS IS A JOINT MESSAGE FROM EMBASSY TEL AVIV AND CONGEN JERUSALEM.

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) Direct deposit for all PA security forces is scheduled to begin April 1 (see Jerusalem septel). Civilian PA workers are scheduled to have their salaries deposited April 3. At least one Palestinian was injured March 31 when the IDF forcefully broke up an anti-barrier demonstration near Bayt Liqya village. Details of the Burns/Hadley meeting scheduled to be held in Jericho April 1 was leaked to the Palestinian press, which published information on the venue and time in the April 1 newspapers. The situation was relatively quiet in Gaza March 31-April 1, with a total of seven mortar/missile attacks overnight, but no injuries reported. End Summary.

WEST BANK

2. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Death: Nil.

-- Injury: At least one Palestinian, Mohammad Hamed al Fakihi, was injured March 31 when the IDF forcefully broke up an anti-barrier demonstration near Bayt Liqya village.

-- Shooting: Nil.

-- Stone-Throwing: Palestinians threw stones at an IDF jeep patrolling in Shaufat refugee camp March 31, and the IDF responded by firing tear gas at the stone-throwers.

3. (SBU) ARRESTS:

-- The IDF March 31 arrested 12 Palestinian militants who had hidden in a mental hospital in Bethlehem. The army and the gunmen inside exchanged fire for about two hours before the arrest operation was completed.

4. (SBU) SETTLEMENTS:

-- The IDF removed two containers from a settler site known as Bat Ayin West-West March 31.

5. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

-- Direct deposit for all PA security forces is scheduled to begin April 1 (see Jerusalem septel). Civilian PA workers are scheduled to have their salaries deposited April 3.

-- Details of the Burns/Hadley meeting scheduled to be held in Jericho April 1 were leaked to the Palestinian press, which published information on the venue and time in the April 1 newspapers.

GAZA

6. (SBU) ATTACKS:

-- Deaths: Nil.

-- Injuries: Nil.

-- Mortars/Rockets/Hand Grenades: The IDF reported that Palestinians fired a single mortar shell at Morag settlement, and three shells at IDF outposts near Khan Yunis March 31. Also on March 31, one anti-tank missile was fired at an IDF

outpost near Khan Yunis and another at an IDF outpost south of Rafah. One anti-tank missile was fired at Kfar Darom settlement April 1. No injuries were reported in any of these attacks.

-- Shootings: The IDF reported a total of five shooting attacks March 31-April 1: two near Khan Yunis, and one each near Katif settlement, Netzarim, and Ha Orchan Crossing.

-- Explosions: The IDF found and successfully disabled an IED south of Nahal Oz Crossing March 31, according to the IDF.

17. (SBU) DETENTION/ARRESTS:

-- UNRWA reported that IDF gunboats fired on a Palestinian fishing boat off the coast of Dayr al-Balah March 31. Soldiers interrogated the five fisherman on board, but released them without arrest.

18. (SBU) INCURSIONS/DEMOLITIONS:

-- UNRWA reported that IDF troops occupied a Palestinian home near Netzarim the evening of March 31. The troops restricted the family to one room of the house and then used the house as a lookout overnight. The IDF relinquished control of the house the morning of April 1.

19. (SBU) BORDER CROSSINGS/CHECKPOINTS:

-- Route Four (Salahadeen Road), the main north-south traffic artery, was open for Palestinians.

-- Erez Crossing was closed to Palestinian laborers April 1, but open for merchants over 28 years old; 214 merchants crossed into Israel April 1. The IDF also allowed diplomats in vehicles and internationals on foot to cross. UN agencies, however, refuse to authorize their non-diplomatic staff to cross on foot; staff must therefore wait to cross until they can join someone crossing in a diplomatic vehicle. The Erez Industrial Zone was open April 1, with 3,655 workers entering the Zone.

-- Catch-up for Erez Crossing: 182 merchants age 28 years or older entered Israel March 31.

-- Catch-up for Erez Industrial Zone: 1,978 workers entered the Zone March 31.

-- Sufa Crossing was closed for Palestinian laborers April 1, but open for the import into Gaza of aggregates used in construction.

-- Karni Terminal was partially open April 1 for the import and export of goods into the Gaza Strip. Unpacked goods may enter, but no Palestinian containers may enter or exit.

-- Rafah Terminal was open for Palestinian travelers.

-- Tel al-Sultan checkpoint was closed April 1. Toufah checkpoint was open for the exit of residents of al-Mowassi April 1 without restriction; Toufah was also open for re-entry after prior coordination with Palestinian authorities and COGAT.

110. (SBU) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

-- UNRWA reported that approximately 200 PFLP members gathered March 31 at the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), calling on the international community to intervene and gain the release of Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli jails. The protesters dispersed peacefully after one hour.

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KURTZER